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Gandhi and his Non-Violence

(Draft syllabus)

Hist/Aslc 272
Tues/Thurs 1-220

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Description

Political and social movements in South Africa, the United States of America, Germany, Myanmar, India, and elsewhere, have drawn inspiration from the non-violent political techniques advocated by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi during his leadership of the anti-colonial struggle for Indian freedom from British colonial rule. This course charts a global history of Gandhi's thought about non-violence and its expression in civil disobedience and resistance movements both in India and the world. Organized in three modules, the first situates Gandhi through consideration of the diverse sources of his own historical and ideological formation; the second examines the historical contexts and practices through which non-violence acquired meaning for him and considers important critiques; the third explores the various afterlives of Gandhian politics in movements throughout the world. We will examine autobiography and biography, Gandhi's collected works, various types of primary source, political, social, and intellectual history, and audio-visual materials. In addition to widely disseminated narratives of Gandhi as a symbol of non-violence, the course will closely attend to the deep contradictions concerning race, caste, gender, and class that characterized his thought and action. By unsettling conventional accounts of his significance, we will grapple with the problem of how to make sense of his troubled legacy. Prior familiarity with the subject matter is not required. Two class meetings per week. Limited to 25 students.

Requirements

Class participation and engagement: 30%

Moodle posts (brief reading-responses that engage and raise questions about the assigned materials; approximately 200 words; 10 over the course of the semester): 15%

2 papers (of 6-8 double-spaced pages; due following the completion of each module of reading): 30%

1 final paper (of 8-10 double-spaced pages; due following completion of the course on a topic individual interest): 25%

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Readings

Please purchase the following books at the college bookstore/online (alternative editions/publishers are acceptable). They will also be available at the library reserve desk. The remaining readings are in course readers available with Tracie Rubeck, Academic Department Coordinator, Department of History (Chapin Hall).

Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Judith M. Brown and Anthony J. Parel (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, (New York: Penguin, 1996).

David Hardiman, *Gandhi In His Time and Ours*, (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003).

Policies

Regular attendance is necessary; any more than 5 unexcused absences will result in a failing grade; please provide an authorized excuse if you miss class.

I grant extensions when there are documentable reasons that prevent students from timely submission.

Please take notes in class; I prefer a laptop-free classroom, unless required as an accommodation.

Please abide by the Student Code of Conduct. See the college handbook for further details: https://www.amherst.edu/offices/student-affairs/community-standards/student-code-of-conduct

Please email me, or speak with me, if you want to make an appointment during office hours or another time of mutual convenience.

Objectives

The central goal of this course is to acquire a historically informed understanding of Gandhi's life, thought, and legacies in India and beyond. Intellectually, we juxtapose his non-violence against his profound capacity for its anti-thesis, indeed, the violence that he represented for various actors in assessing his historical significance. Practically, the course offers the opportunity to exercise and develop the skill of historical analysis in its varied dimensions (writing, reading, analyzing, speaking, and conversing), in the context of primary materials and the multidisciplinary scholarship on and related to Gandhi.

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Schedule of Readings

Tuesday, September 5th: Introductions and preliminaries

Module 1: Making the "Mahatma"

Thursday, September 7th:

Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7aMhaFFa6c&t=2352s

Tuesday, September 12th:

Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), foreword by Sisela Bok, Introduction, 3-86.

Thursday, September 14th:

Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 90-130, 145-52, 185-226.

Tuesday, September 19th:

M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, (Stanford: Academic Reprints, 1954 (1928)), Preface, 21-38, 102-115; 320-40.

Thursday, September 21st:

Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988 (1958)), v-ix, 3-104.

Tuesday, September 26th:

M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

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Thursday, September 28th:

Judith M. Brown and Anthony J. Parel (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 11-50, 71-92.

Tuesday, October 3rd:

Judith M. Brown and Anthony J. Parel (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 93-134, 154-172.

Thursday, October 5th:

Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 67-122.

October 7-10: Fall break

Module 2: Historical Contexts and Critique

Thursday, October 12th:

Judith M. Brown and Anthony J. Parel (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 51-70, 173-198.

Tuesday, October 17th:

Harold Coward (ed.), *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 41-67, 131-152, 193-217.

Thursday, October 19th:

Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 123-176.

Rudrangshu Mukherjee, "Gandhi's Swaraj," *Economic and Political* Weekly, *Vol.* 44, No. 50 (DECEMBER 12-18, 2009), pp. 34-39.

Tuesday, October 24th:

B.R. Ambedkar, *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables*, (Bombay: Thacker and Co., 1945), preface, chapters 1, 10, 11 [i-18, 250-308].

Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 205-35.

Thursday, October 26th:

Ashwini Tambe, "Gandhi's 'Fallen' Sisters: Difference and the National Body Politic," *Social Scientist*, 37:1/2, 21-38.

Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 177-205.

Tuesday, October 31st:

Shahid Amin, "Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921-2," *Subaltern Studies, Volume 3*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), 1-61.

Shahid Amin, "The Presence of Gandhi," in *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri-Chaura, 1922-1992*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 161-74.

Thursday, November 2nd:

Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 257-283.

Frederick Puckle, "The Gandhi-Jinnah Conversations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Jan., 1945), 318-323.

Tuesday, November 7th:

Yasmin Khan, "Performing Peace: Gandhi's assassination as a critical moment in the consolidation of the Nehruvian state," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 45, 2011, 57-80.

Nathuram Godse, "May it please your honour…" 8 November, 1948: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qFsSho6YFpkNRFjrUdn0sjV_pI_jfUyamVtn1hsbOAM/edit?hl=en_US

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Module 3: Legacies, Indian and global

Thursday, November 9th:

David Hardiman, *Gandhi In His Time and Ours*, (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 1-11, 198-237.

"In Search of Gandhi": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itBdUthGEXA&t=402s

Tuesday, November 14th:

David Hardiman, *Gandhi In His Time and Ours*, (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 238-93.

Thursday, November 16th:

Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "Preface" and "Gandhi in the Mind of America," in *Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays: Gandhi in the World and at Home*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), vii-x, 92-139.

November 18-26: Thanksgiving break

Tuesday, November 28th:

Mary Elizabeth King, *Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr: The Power of Nonviolent Action*, (UNESCO, 1999), chapter 3.

Dennis Dalton, "Mohandas, Malcolm, and Martin," in *Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 168-187.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3Ife3CTBnQ

Thursday, November 30th:

Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *The South African Gandhi: Stretcher-Bearer of Empire*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 19-65, 280-306.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/06/ghana-academics-petition-removal-mahatma-gandhi-statue-african-heroes

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/oct/17/southafrica.india

Tuesday, December 5th:

Ramin Jahanbegloo, *The Gandhian Moment*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), Foreword, Preface, Chapters 1 and 7 – vii-x, xi-xii, 1-22, 157-62.

Thursday, December 7th:

Arundhati Roy, "Debunking the Gandhi myth," The Laura Flanders Show:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-yMiBGBOe0

Karuna Mantena, "The Power of Non-violence," 11 March 2016:
https://aeon.co/essays/nonviolence-has-returned-from-obscurity-to-become-a-new-force

Tuesday, December 12th: Concluding considerations